# \*\*\*Cuba Democracy DA\*\*\*

\*\*\*Shell\*\*\* 2

1NC Cuba Democracy DA 3

\*\*\*Uniqueness\*\*\* 8

2NC – Cuban Democracy Coming Now 9

\*\*\*Link\*\*\* 11

2NC – Link Wall 12

AT: Link Turns 14

\*\*\*Impacts\*\*\* 16

Cuba Model Good 17

Degrowth Good 19

AT: Environment Impact Defense 20

\*\*\*Aff Answers\*\*\* 21

2AC – No Cuban Democracy 22

2AC – Embargo Fails 23

2AC – AT: Degrowth Impact 25

## \*\*\*Shell\*\*\*

### 1NC Cuba Democracy DA

#### Cuban democracy is emerging organically now --- lifting the embargo would empower the regime.

Ron Radosh, 3/18/2013.  PJ Media columnist and Adjunct Fellow at the Hudson Institute. “  
The Time to Help Cuba’s Brave Dissidents Is Now: Why the Embargo Must Not be Lifted,” PJ Media, http://pjmedia.com/ronradosh/2013/03/18/the-time-to-help-cubas-brave-dissidents-is-now-why-the-embargo-must-not-be-lifted/?singlepage=true.

The presence this week in the United States of dissident Cuban blogger Yoani Sanchez, the most well-known of Cuba’s brave dissident community, has again brought to the forefront the reality of the situation facing the Cuban people in the Castro brothers’ prison state.

Last week, Sanchez spoke at both Columbia University and New York University, where she [recalled](http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/03/18/3292371/cuban-blogger-yoani-sanchez-recalls.html#storylink=cpy) how different things were a decade ago during what Cubans refer to as the “Black Spring,” when independent journalists were given a summary trial and large jail sentences. It was the arrest of these opponents of the regime that led to the Ladies in White, the wives and mothers of prisoners who regularly marched in silence in front of government buildings each week.

Ten years ago, Sanchez pointed out, there was no access to the internet for anyone in Cuba, it barely existed, and there were no flash drives to record information and no social networking sites to spread the word about the state’s repression. Now, bloggers like Sanchez — who gains access to tourist hotels, posing as a Westerner so she can use their internet facilities — have managed to get past the regime’s ban on use of the internet and to freely reveal to the world the reality of life in Cuba.

“Many independent journalists and peaceful activists who began their work precariously have now resorted to blogs, for example, as a format to circulate information about programs and initiatives to collect signatures,” Sánchez said. She and others have done just that, getting signatures on petitions to demand the release in particular of one well-known Cuban journalist. In addition, Sanchez is circulating a petition known as “the Citizens’ Demand” to pressure the Cuban regime to ratify the UN political rights agreements signed in 2008. The signers are calling for a legal and political framework for a full debate of all ideas relevant to the internal crisis facing the Cuban people on the island.

In effect, this demand for democracy is nothing less than a call for creation of a political democracy that would, if implemented, lead to the collapse of the edifice of the Communist one-party state.

As Sanchez put it: “It is important to have initiatives for transforming the law and demand concrete public spaces within the country.” Since a totalitarian state does not allow for such space and prohibits a real civil society from emerging, the actions of the dissidents are a mechanism for forcing such change from below. They are fighting what her fellow blogger Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo called a “culture of fear over the civil society” that the secret police seek to enforce.

For liberals and leftists in the United States, the main demand they always raise is to “lift the embargo.” According to the argument they regularly make, the embargo has to be lifted for the following reasons: 1) it is not effective; 2) it gives the regime the excuse to argue to the Cuban people that the poverty they suffer is the result of not being able to trade with the United States and other nations honoring the embargo; 3) lifting the embargo would hence deprive Fidel and Raul Castro from their main propaganda argument, revealing that the reasons for a collapsed economy are the regime’s own policies; and 4) trade and travel from the United States would expose Cubans to Americans and others who live in freedom, help curb anti-Americanism, and eventually lead to slow reform of the system.

What these liberals and leftists leave out is that this demand — lifting the embargo — is also the number one desire of the Cuban Communists.

In making it the key demand, these well-meaning (at least some of them) liberals echo precisely the propaganda of the Cuban government, thereby doing the Castro brothers’ work for them here in the United States. And, as we know, many of those who call for this actually believe that the Cuban government is on the side of the people, and favor the Cuban Revolution which they see as a positive role model for the region. They have always believed, since the 1960s of their youth, that socialism in Cuba has pointed the way forward to development and liberty based on the kind of socialist society they wish could exist in the United States.

Another brave group of Cuban opponents of the regime has actually taped a television interview filmed illegally in Havana. “Young Cuban democracy leader Antonio Rodiles,” an American support group called [Capitol Hill Cubans](http://www.capitolhillcubans.com/2013/03/cuban-democracy-leaders-stress.html) has reported, “has just released the latest episode of his civil society project Estado de Sats (filmed within Cuba), where he discusses the importance U.S. sanctions policy with two of Cuba’s most renowned opposition activists and former political prisoners, Guillermo Fariñas and Jose Daniel Ferrer.”

The argument they present is aimed directly at those on the left in the United States, some of whom think they are helping democracy in Cuba by calling for an end to the embargo. In strong and clear language, the two dissidents say the following:

If at this time, the [economic] need of the Cuban government is satisfied through financial credits and the lifting of the embargo, **repression would increase, it would allow for a continuation of the Castro’s society**, totalitarianism would strengthen its hold and philosophically, it would just be immoral … If you did an opinion poll among Cuban opposition activists, **the majority would be in favor of not lifting the embargo**.

Next, they nail the claim that travel without restrictions by citizens of our country to Cuba would help spread freedom. The men respond:

In a cost-benefit analysis, travel to Cuba by Americans **would be of greatest benefit to the Castro regime**, while the Cuban people would be the least to benefit. With all of the controls and the totalitarian system of the government, it would be perfectly able to control such travel.

We know this, as I [reported](http://http//pjmedia.com/ronradosh/2012/08/15/graduate-of-my-commie-high-school-goes-to-cuba/)a few months ago, about how a group of Americans taking the usual state-controlled Potemkin village tour came back raving about how wonderful and free Cuba is, and how Cuban socialism works.

Finally, the two former prisoners made this point about lifting the embargo:

To lift the embargo at this time would be very prejudicial to us. The government prioritizes all of the institutions that guarantee its hold on power. The regime’s political police and its jailers receive a much higher salary and privileges than a doctor or engineer, or than any other worker that benefits society. We’ve all seen municipalities with no fuel for an ambulance, yet with 10, 15, 20, 50 cars full of fuel ready to go repress peaceful human rights activists.

Indeed, just this past week, more evidence came out substantiating how the secret police killed Cuba’s leading political opponent Oswaldo Paya, and sought to blame it on a car crash for which he and those with him were responsible. Last week, [the Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obama-administration-should-urge-a-probe-of-oswaldo-paya-death/2013/03/13/34f2a0fe-8b7e-11e2-b63f-f53fb9f2fcb4_story.html) in a tough editorial made the point:

Mr. Payá, who pioneered the Varela Project, a petition drive in 2002 seeking the guarantee of political freedom in Cuba, was killed in a car wreck July 22, along with a youth activist, Harold Cepero. The driver of the vehicle, Ángel Carromero, a Spaniard, was convicted and imprisoned on charges of vehicular homicide; in December, he was released to Spain. He told us in an interview published on the opposite page last week that the car carrying Mr. Payá was rammed from behind by a vehicle with government license plates. His recollections suggest that Mr. Payá died not from reckless driving but from a purposeful attempt to silence him — forever.

This is the kind of treatment effective opponents of the regime get from Cuba’s secret police, measures taken upon orders of Raul Castro, whom useful idiots like Danny Glover and Sean Penn regularly visit. They fawn at his feet and those of his ailing brother, Fidel Castro.

This week, Sanchez and her colleague come to testify before Congress. They will speak as well at a public forum today, Tuesday, at the Cato Institute. You can watch on a live stream at 12:30 p.m. on the organization’s [website](http://www.cato.org/events/future-freedom-cuba).

The Cuban people have suffered long enough at the hands of a regime that came into power promising freedom and democracy, and instead inflicted on the Cuban people a totalitarian government modeled on that of the old Soviet Union. Cuba is finally on the verge of change, and it is time the people of our country give whatever support we can to those within Cuba bravely working for the creation of a real democracy in Cuba, and an end to the decades of rule by the Castro brothers.

#### The Cuban opposition movement is creating a model for economic democracy --- success will spread it globally.

[Keith Harrington](http://truth-out.org/author/itemlist/user/44903), 1/17/2013. Former Maryland and Washington D.C. Field Director for the [Chesapeake Climate Action Network](http://www.chesapeakeclimate.org/" \t "_blank), currently pursuing a master’s degree in economics and leading NEI's Campus Network affiliate group at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan, and is a contributing writer on climate, energy and the new-economy at several publications including Truthout, Grist.org, Alternet, and the Huffington Post. “New Cuba: Beachhead for Economic Democracy Beyond Capitalism,” Truthout, http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/13918-the-new-cuba-a-beachhead-for-economic-democracy-we-should-support.

The year 2012 may have been the United Nation's [International Year of Cooperatives](http://social.un.org/coopsyear/" \t "_blank), but 2013 may turn out to be the more historic year for worker-ownership if the Cubans have anything to say about it.

To listen to the mainstream American media, however, you'd never know it. As a video supplement to a recent [New York Times article](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/09/world/americas/changes-to-agriculture-highlight-cubas-problems.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0" \t "_blank)  makes clear, the corporate press has already made up its mind on how the story of Cuba's economic liberalization is bound to end:

"In a state defined by all-consuming communism for the past 50 years,capitalist change comes in fits and starts, and only at the pace that the government is willing to allow."[Emphasis added]

In other words, Cuba's post-communist story ends just like China's - in capitalism, because according to orthodox dogma, there's nowhere else to go. Trapped by the limited possibilities of this dichotomist capitalism-or-communism mentality, mainstream commentators lack the perspective needed to appreciate (much less inform others) that a transition away from a state-dominated command economy might conceivably lead to a type of market that is very distinct from our elite-shareholder-dominated and profit-fixated capitalist model.

But that is precisely the [nuanced story](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/10/fidel-castro-cuba-communist" \t "_blank) we find in Cuba when we dig just below the surface and consider the very guidelines the Cuban government has adopted to steer the transition process. Since the state unveiled its nuevos lineamientos or new guidelines for economic development in 2010, the easing of government restrictions on private entrepreneurial activity has only constituted a single aspect of a much broader picture of change. Unfortunately, The New York Times and its ilk have gotten so hung up on the privatization shift, that they've left out crucial details about the types of private enterprises the Cuban government is attempting to foster.

Specifically, the government is placing high priority on the development of [worker-owned-and-managed firms](http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/667.php" \t "_blank) and has recently passed a [law](http://cubantriangle.blogspot.com/2012/12/the-new-cooperatives-law.html" \t "_blank) intended to launch an experimental cadre of 200 such firms. Under the law, workers - rather than government bureaucrats or elite boards of directors - will democratically run the businesses, set their own competitive prices, determine wages and salaries and decide what to do with the profits they generate. In other words, Cuba's new worker cooperatives will operate pretty much along the same lines as their successful cousins in the capitalist world, including Spain's [Mondragon Cooperative Corporation](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/24/alternative-capitalism-mondragon" \t "_blank).

But **what sets the Cuban cooperative experiment apart and renders it such an incredible opportunity for the global worker-cooperative movement, is its occurrence in a political-economic milieu that is currently free from the distorting effects of capitalist competition**. This is significant because while cooperatives have proven just as [competitive](http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/Worker-Democracy-Productivity.pdf" \t "_blank) as capitalist firms in a capitalist context, when capitalist profits and growth assume top priority, worker-owned firms may be compelled to act more like capitalist firms and subordinate core objectives such as worker empowerment and well-being, community development and environmental sustainability. Indeed, as cooperatives grow, even the percentage of actual worker owners in their ranks has been known to decline, as we've seen with Mondragon.

In short, the worker-ownership movement could greatly benefit from a national-scale economic environment that will allow cooperative enterprises to develop according to their own particular democratic nature and exhibit their true potential, free from the profit-above-all dictates of capitalism. **No country bears as much promise in this respect than contemporary Cuba**.

Nevertheless, for Cuba's experiment to work, all efforts should be made to steer the economy and the behavior of the country's emergent private entrepreneurial class in a direction that comports with the ethos and objectives of economic democracy. Above all, this would likely require severe restrictions, if not an outright ban, on the entry of large foreign capitalist firms or the establishment of large domestic capitalist firms. For, as economists such as Jamee Moudud of Sarah Lawrence University and many structuralist thinkers have pointed out, as jobs and tax revenues become dependent on the success of capitalist firms, societies [become constrained](http://www.gpia.info/files/u706/Moudud_2011-10.pdf" \t "_blank) in their ability to pursue developmental paths that do not prioritize capitalist accumulation. Accordingly, during the early years of the cooperative experiment, Cuba should seek to limit foreign direct investment to cooperative or [triple-bottom-line](http://www.bcorporation.net/" \t "_blank) firms as much as possible, facilitate joint-ventures between such firms and its own cooperatives and continue to seek industrial loans largely from committed social democratic partners such as Venezuela, and other "pink-tide" trade partners.

#### Economic democracy is key to human survival through sustainable degrowth.

[Shann Turnbull, 1/20/2013.](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=26239" \o "View other papers by this author" \t "_blank) International Institute for Self-Governance; Sustainable Money Working Group. “Sustaining Society with Economic Democracy,” 2013 International Conference on Economics and Social Science (ICESS 2013), Holiday Inn, Melbourne, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=2220072.

Economic democracy provides an efficient way for **sustaining both humanity and the environment**. Besides injustices, economic inequality also increases exploitation of the environment to provide luxury for a few instead of survival for the many.

This situation arises because a decrease in the current global population is required to **allow both the environment and the existence of humanity to become sustainable**. Trainer [1] points out that “De-growth is not enough”. Sustainability of humanity then becomes dependent on economic democracy to allow natureʼs resources to be widely shared. Importantly economic democracy can also makes de-growth more economically and politically feasible as discussed in the concluding section.

Already seventy countries have declining populations with twenty being advanced economies [2]. This is partly explained by affluent nations providing education about birth control as well as providing the means to control reproduction. Another reason for declining population is that welfare support in affluent societies removes the need for couples to have more children to support them in their old age.

A fundamental requirement for naturally reducing the global population is for nations to provide income security for all citizens. On way of achieving this is through a Universal Guaranteed Income (UGI). A UGI can be provided with capitalism, socialism or communism. For the purpose of considering economic democracy, socialism and communism are similar as the distribution of a UGI becomes dependent upon the government whether it is democratically elected or if it is a dictatorship.

Even the former Premier of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), Zhao Ziyang, recognized that dictatorships are incompatible with economic democracy. The Premier stated on a visit to Australia in 1983 that economic democracy was not possible without political democracy [3]. Economic democracy had been promoted in the PRC since the 1980ʼs by Beijing based Professor Jiang Yiwei [4]. As a member of Law Committee of the National Peopleʼs Congress he published a book From Enterprise-Based Economy To Economic Democracy. Jiang states (p. 191) “Comrade Zhao Ziyang pointed out the essential difference between socialist and capitalist commodity economies lies in their different ownerships”.

2. Democratizing ownership

Jiang recommended (p. 231) that enterprises should be “encouraging workers and staff to buy shares and increase their individual accumulation”. This is a step towards capitalism. However, the spread of share ownership in the US was not achieved by workers/citizens buying shares but through inheritance and/or by tax incentives for firms to grant shares to their employees and/or other citizens.

In 1991, the State Commission for the Reform of the Economic System in the PRC invited a foreign faculty to contribute their knowledge on techniques for democratizing ownership. The faculty was led by Jeff Gates who had been the legal counsel to Senator Russell Long, chairman of the US Senate Committee on Finance. Senator Long was instrumental in introducing tax incentives to promote Employee Ownership Share Ownership Plans (ESOPs). A San Francisco based attorney, Louis Kelso [5][6] invented ESOPs in 1957. Kelso introduced Senator Long to ESOPs in 1973.

From 1980 to 1987 Gates crafted US tax laws to provide incentives that resulted in over 12,000 mainly private US firms issuing shares to 12 percent of the US work force through ESOPs. The tax incentives could also be used to include suppliers, customers and other citizens to create Universal Share Ownership Plans (USOPs).

Gates had been invited to Eastern Europe in 1990 to introduce ESOPs as a technique for privatization. However, Gates found that ESOPs had little relevance in communist societies that lacked a developed banking or tax system. For this reason he invited your author to join him in Beijing. My complementary proposals for distributing ownership from the bottom-up by changing corporate charters are described in my book Democratising the Wealth of Nations [7]. A third member of our faculty was Paul Kouris, the legal counsel of Science Applications International Corporation, then one of the largest US employee owned firms.

In 1983 Jiang had visited Yugoslavia to study the economic democracy initiatives introduced in the 1950ʼs by “Comrade Tito”. Jiang reported (p. 229) the impressive results in increasing living standards from firms adopting “self-determination” practices. However, Jiang expressed two concerns. First, self-determination had gone too far without sufficient co-ordination from the central government, and second, workers did not obtain shares. Share values provide feedback information for guiding business operations and so co-coordinating the activities of firms. However, share and/or product price data is far too lean to be capable of providing qualitative feedback information on how to make firms competitive.

Harvard Professor Michael Porter reported that US firms lacked competitiveness because they relied mainly on price signal feedback. Porter [8] identified how Japanese and European firms obtained additional qualitative feedback information from network relationships with suppliers, employees, customers and other stakeholders. Porter stated (p.3) that Americans are “trapped in a system in which all are acting rationally but none are satisfied”.

## \*\*\*Uniqueness\*\*\*

### 2NC – Cuban Democracy Coming Now

#### Cuban opposition movement is strong --- Chavez’s death creates an opening.

[András Simonyi](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andras-simonyi) [and Jaime Aparicio Otero](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-aparicio-otero), 3/12/2013. Ambassador András Simonyi (60) is the Managing Director of the Center for Transatlantic Relations (CTR) at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C.; and former Ambassador of Bolivia to the United States. “Cuba's Future Transition to Democracy Can Be a Success,” Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andras-simonyi/cubas-future-transition-t\_b\_2859520.html.

It is too early to say how Hugo Chavez's passing will effect developments elsewhere in the region. One wonders first and foremost about the consequences on and in Cuba. It is a reminder to the Castro brothers that power is ephemeral. Cuba is ready for change. In spite of the efforts by the regime to paint a rosy picture, eye witnesses tell a sad story. Living conditions are bad, the economy survives only at the mercy of Venezuela. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission, in its 2012 a report on Cuba, speaks of "permanent and systematical violations of the fundamental rights of Cuban citizens." Ironically, however while the Cuban people suffer, the regime is internationally stronger than ever. Progressive rock musicians, like Gorki in the band Porno Para Ricardo, are prevented from writing and performing freely. The international pressure for the respect for human rights is weak and inefficient. It seems like the ethic conscience of the west is comfortable with the situation. It shouldn't be. Solidarity with the people submitted to human rights violations by dictatorships is a moral imperative. However, the opposition movement is gaining voice, even in face of a forgetful international community. They are increasingly self-confident. Oswaldo Paya is now dead, but others, like Yoani Sanchez stepped into his place. Courageous people, who defy threats and speak more and more openly about the true state of the country. They deserve all the support they ask for. Cuba is ripe for change.

#### Economic democracy is emerging now but the regime will fight for a statist model.

Roger Burbach, 5/25/2013. Director of the Center for the Study of the Americas (CENSA) based in Berkeley, CA and is the author with Michael Fox and Federico Fuentes of Latin Americas Turbulent Transitions: The Future of 21st Century Socialism. “Restructuring Cuba's Economy Creates Debate over Democracy and Socialism in the 21st Century,” CounterPunch, http://www.solidarityeconomy.net/2013/05/25/a-cuban-spring-the-debates-are-engaged/.

This is a fruitful period of experimentation and debate in Cuba. It is now almost seven years since Raúl Castro replaced his brother Fidel, first as interim president in 2006 and then as president in 2008. Under Raúl, the country is taking steps to transform the economy, and a critical discussion is erupting over the dismantling of the authoritarian Communist model. Julio Díaz Vázquez, an economist at the University of Havana, declares: “With the updating of the economic model, Cuba faces complex challenges . . . in its social and political institutions. . . . The heritage of the Soviet model makes it necessary to break with the barriers erected by inertia, intransigence, [and] a double standard.” He adds, “These imperfections have led to deficiencies in [Cuba’s] democracy, its creative liberties, and its citizens’ participation.”1

Among the most important changes that have echoed internationally is the decree that took effect January 14 allowing Cubans to travel abroad without securing a special exit permit. Also, homes and vehicles can now be bought and sold openly, recognizing private ownership for the first time since the state took control of virtually all private property in the early 1960s.

The government is distributing uncultivated land, which constitutes about half of the countryside’s agriculturally viable terrain, in usufruct for 10 years in 10-hectare parcels with the possibility of lease renewal. To date there are 172,000 new agricultural producers. Beyond agriculture, 181 occupations filled by self-employed or independent workers such as food vendors, hair stylists, taxi drivers, [plumbers](http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/04/23/a-cuban-spring/), and shoe repairmen can now be licensed as trabajo por cuenta propia—self-employment. As of late 2012, about 380,000 people are self-employed in a work force of 5 million.

The most dramatic move against the old economic order came in April 2011, when the Sixth Communist Party Congress issued 313 lineamientos, or guidelines. A potpourri of measures and recommendations, the document calls for autonomy for the state enterprises, an expansion of cooperatives, new taxing laws, and changes in the system of subsidies, including modification of the monthly food rationing system. The government established a committee of over 90 people, led by former minister of economy Marino Murillo, to implement the policy recommendations.

A major weakness of the lineamientos, according to Armando Nova of the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy, is that they fail to tackle major macroeconomic challenges. While the lineamientos acknowledge the country’s low economic productivity, as well as large trade deficits, there is no analysis of how to overcome these systemic problems. Moreover, the lineamientos contain no overarching conceptualization of where the society is headed other than a general commitment to socialism. “What type of socialism is being referred to?” Nova asks.2 Is the new socialism akin to what Lenin outlined in the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921, when Russia permitted small-scale peasant production and private businesses? What is the role of private property in Cuba, and how can a new economy curb the growth of inequality? These are all critical questions that the Sixth Party Congress failed to address.

There are, however, different schools of thought on how to move the economy forward. Camila Piñeiro Harnecker, in an essay titled “Visions of the Socialism That Guide Present-Day Changes in Cuba,” describes three different visions: (a) a statist position, largely reflecting the old guard, (b) a market socialist perspective, advanced by many economists, and (c) an autogestionario, or self-management, stance that calls for democratic and sustainable development primarily through the promotion of cooperatives.

The statists recognize that Cuba faces serious economic problems but argue that they can be corrected through a more efficient state, not through a dismantling of the state. They call for more discipline and greater efficiency among state industries and enterprises. A loosening of state control, they contend, would result in greater disorganization and even allow capitalist tendencies to emerge. This position points to the disaster that occurred in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s after an attempt to end central control over state enterprises.

The statist position is most deeply entrenched among midlevel bureaucrats and the party cadre, who fear a loss of status and income with the end of direct control over Cuba’s economy. Some heads of the Cuban military enterprises—which include food and clothing factories, as well as hotels, farms, and telecommunication stores—also manifest this tendency, although surprisingly many officers, including Raúl Castro, are in favor of decentralization and a greater use of market mechanisms.

Those committed to a socialist market economy contend that only the market can unleash Cuba’s productive forces. To increase productivity and efficiency, the state needs to grant more autonomy to enterprises and allow competitive forces to drive the market. In the short term, privatization is necessary, even if this means an increase in inequality, the exploitation of wage workers, and environmental degradation. As the country develops, the state can step in to level the differences and distribute the new surpluses to support social programs.

The economists who argue for market socialism tend to be located in what is referred to as academia—the research institutes and centers, many of which are affiliated with the University of Havana.4 Academia looks to the Chinese and Vietnamese experiences, particularly their appeal to foreign investment, although they believe that Cuba should do a better job of controlling corruption. This position also finds support among state technocrats and some managers who want to see their enterprises expand and become more profitable as they are privatized. There is also significant support for the market economy among self-employed and working people who feel that they can enjoy the material prosperity of China or the Western world only through more individual initiative and private enterprise via the market.

The autogestionario position, which Piñeiro advocates, has a fundamentally different view from the economists over how to break with the old statist model. Instead of relying on competition and the market to advance productivity, the democratic socialist values of participation, association, and solidarity should be at the heart of the workplace and the new economy. Control should not come from the top down but from the bottom up, as workers engage in self-management to further their social and economic concerns. As Piñeiro writes, “The autogestionarios emphasize the necessity of promoting a socialist conscience, solidarity, and a revolutionary commitment to the historically marginalized.” These principles can be practiced in cooperatives and municipal enterprises, leading to increased consciousness and productivity in the workplace.5

Piñeiro admits that support for the autogetionario position is less consolidated, coming from intellectuals, professionals, and those involved in the international debates over 21st-century socialism. One of the problems is that the old statist model used the terms participation, autonomy, and workers’ control to characterize the relations in the factories, enterprises, and cooperatives that operated poorly in Cuba, and this language has now fallen into disfavor. Today those who try to revive these terms are often seen as making a utopian attempt to resuscitate failed policies.

Ultimately, Piñeiro is optimistic, seeing “a new path for the nation.” It will be a hybrid composed of “a state socialism better organized, a market,” and “a truly democratic sector.”

## \*\*\*Link\*\*\*

### 2NC – Link Wall

#### Lifting the embargo gives the regime access to credit lines --- maintaining it will expedite regime collapse.

Silvio Canto, Jr, 3/21/2013. “Yoani Sanchez is wonderful but wrong about the embargo,” American Thinker, http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2013/03/yoani\_sanchez\_is\_wonderful\_but\_wrong\_about\_the\_embargo.html.

Yoani Sanchez is a wonderful lady.  She has single handily put Cuba's repressive state on the front pages.   [Her trip to the US and other places](http://babalublog.com/2013/03/20/yoani-sanchez-comes-to-washington-dc/" \t "_blank)has been a great success even if there were [demonstrators calling her a CIA agent](http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/feb/18/pro-cuba-protesters-halt-dissident-yoanis-event/?print&page=all" \t "_blank).  I hope that they don't email the editors of American Thinker that I am an agent of the CIA, too.

By the way, do these demonstrators know that such demonstrations are not allowed in Cuba?  It's amazing to me the extent to which the left will go to make fools of themselves.

Yoani is wrong about the embargo. I am not angry with Yoani about that.  I think that she has never been told, or heard about, the real story of the embargo and why the Castro dictatorship is desperately trying to lift it.

Cuba does not have an embargo problem. Instead, it has a "we can't get credit anymore" problem. Cuba also has a "socialism does not work" problem.

Cuba can do business with any country on earth. The world is ready and willing to sell its goods and services to Cuba. Unfortunately for the Castro dictatorship, "credit lines" are not being extended.  No one wants to sell Cuba on credit, a reflection of the island's inability to service its debts.

I repeat: Cuba has a "socialism is a GRANDE PROBLEMA" problem!

Cuba restructured its foreign debt in [November 2011](http://www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=23685" \t "_blank).  In fact, Cuban debt is such "basura" (Spanish for junk) that some speculators are buying it at "[6 to 10 cents on the dollar](http://www.cnbc.com/id/49437343" \t "_blank)" hoping that they can make a huge return after Castro dies:  ["Leadership change is frequently good for deadbeat sovereign bonds!"](http://www.cnbc.com/id/49437343" \t "_blank)

Who would benefit from lifting the embargo?  Not the Cuban people!  Not Yoani and her husband!  Not my cousin and family still living in Cuba!

The real beneficiary will be the Castro dictatorship who will now have access to US credit lines, specifically export financing available to US companies. For example, [Alabama sells to Cuba but on a "cash" basis](http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/Courting-Cuba.html" \t "_blank).

The second beneficiary is the Castro family businesses. There is no "free press" in Cuba but we understand that [the family fortune is over $1 billion](http://freetradeunionism.org/archives/fidel-castros-personal-fortune-safe-in-swiss-banks/" \t "_blank)!  These businesses operate in tourism and other trade with Cuba.

"[Castro Inc](http://www.ascecuba.org/publications/proceedings/volume15/pdfs/werlau.pdf" \t "_blank)" is a huge capitalist enterprise operating for the benefit of Fidel and Raul Castro, the same two who are greeted by leftist crowds all over as champions of the poor and providers of free health care for their people. In fact, the only thing that Fidel & Raul Castro know about poverty is that they've created lots of  it!  And the only thing that they know abouthealth care is that [they rely on foreign doctors when they get sick](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/16346039/" \t "_blank).

With all due respect to Yoani, she is wrong about lifting the embargo.  [We learned from Yoani that there are many dissidents in Cuba, such as Dr Biscet, who do not want a relaxation of the embargo](http://babalublog.com/2013/02/21/cuban-prison-and-torture-victim-dr-oscar-biscet-dares-contradict-santa-yoani-de-los-sanchezduring-her-world-tour/" \t "_blank).

Let's hope that they convince Yoani so that we can expedite the collapse of the Castro dictatorship.  In the meantime, please let me repeat that Yoani is a wonderful but very wrong on the embargo.

#### Lifting the embargo enables U.S. corporations to crush Cuban socialism.

Paul D’Amato, Jan/Feb 2007. Managing editor of the ISR. “CUBA: Image and reality,” International Socialist Review, Issue 51, http://www.isreview.org/issues/51/cuba\_image&reality.shtml.

All sincere anti-imperialists should condemn the cruel U.S. economic blockade of Cuba; but we should have no illusions as to what the lifting of that embargo would mean. The proximity of Cuba to the U.S. and the latter’s size and power will lead to the more or less rapid reintegration of Cuba with the U.S. economy. With special rules that allow it to circumvent restrictive laws against trade and investment with Cuba, U.S. agribusiness has exported $1.6 billion in products to Cuba between 2001 and 2005, making Cuba the third largest U.S. food importer in Latin America.72 The Bush administration has also authorized a San Diego company to market three anti-cancer vaccines developed by the Center for Molecular Immunology in Havana.73 A lifting of the embargo would lead not to the flourishing of socialism, by whatever definition. Cuba’s social services—its free health care and educational system especially—would come under threat.

#### Unconditionally lifting the embargo will help the regime more than the people.

Jorge A. Sanguinetty, April 2013. Former economic planner in Cuba with first-hand knowledge of centrally planned economies and how they can transition to more open, market-based systems. Born in Cuba in 1937, Sanguinetty worked as an economist in the tourist and sugar industries before emigrating to the United States in 1967 and obtaining a Ph.D. in economics at the City University of New York. One of the founding members of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), Sanguinetty is the author of Cuba: Realidad y Destino. “Who benefits and loses if the US-Cuba embargo is lifted?” http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/08/who-benefits-and-loses-if-the-us-cuba-embargo-is-lifted-by-jorge-a-sanguinetty/.

The answer depends on the conditions under which the embargo is lifted. I focus on the expected distribution of benefits (and costs) between the government and the Cuban population. A unilateral move by the US Government, without any quid pro quo by the Cuban government can be expected to yield significant benefits to the official establishment with benefits of an unknown magnitude to the population at large. I posit that the magnitude of the latter depends on the degree of internal liberalization of the Cuban economy. Until Raul Castro took over, the centralized command of the Cuban economy was subject to a set or constraints arguably more restrictive than the US embargo. What I have called the internal embargo consisted in the Cuban government outright prohibition for Cubans to own enterprises, freely employ workers or trade domestically and internationally. To many Cubans, probably a majority, such constraints were the main cause of the country ´s secular economic crisis.

Lifting the US embargo under such circumstances was reasonably expected to yield most of the economic and political benefits to the Cuban government and limited economic and no political benefits to the population. With the recent partial economic (not political) liberalization policies implemented by Raul Castro, we can expect that the distribution of economic benefits would be more favorable to the Cuban people. Such new economic freedoms carry a dose of informal political freedoms as Cubans are able to develop relationships among themselves that were tightly constrained until recently, like freedom of assembly, to communicate, and to make transactions and agreements without the tutelage of the government. To wit, as the private sector develops because the government is forced to reduce the inflated payrolls of its enterprises, the authorities lose control on those newly liberated workers.

Nonetheless, **the system might have reached a point of equilibrium under which an unconditional lifting of the US embargo might still accrue enough economic benefit to the Cuban government that it leads to a roll back of some recent reforms** in order to cut loses in the political, albeit informal, arena. This will be a strong reason to oppose an unconditional lifting on the embargo for those who care about the wishes for freedom and welfare of the Cuban people. Many international observers oppose the US embargo on the basis of several debatable assumptions. One is the belief that the embargo has served the Castro government as an excuse for its economic failures, and once lifted the excuse will disappear. Another assumption is that Cubans don´t know that the embargo might have constrained their economy, but not as much as the restrictions of virtually all economic activity by the Cuban government. There are also many Cubans that believe that the US embargo is the only leverage left to pressure the Cuban government to lift internal restrictions in both the economic and the political fronts. It is doubtful that, under the current conditions, a non-negotiated lifting of the US embargo is likely to bring about democracy in Cuba.

### AT: Link Turns

#### Easing travel restrictions disprove the link turn --- lifting embargo would only empower the regime.

[Mitchell Bustillo](http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/author/mitchell-bustillo/), 5/9/2013. First-generation Cuban-American, a Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. “Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo,” International Policy Digest, http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/.

Washington’s goal in its dealings with Havana is clear: facilitate the introduction and growth of democracy while increasing personal freedoms. There are many who argue that the best way to spread democracy is by lifting the embargo and travel restrictions. U.S. Rep. Michael Honda [argues](http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/95861-us-embargo-against-cuba-is-imprudent-rep-michael-honda) that an influx of politically enlightened U.S. travelers to Cuba would put Havana in a difficult place, leading to their own people calling for change. However, this is erroneous. Due to the fractured and weakened state of the embargo, over 400,000 U.S. travelers visited Cuba in 2011, making the United States the second-largest source of foreign visitors after Canada, [according to NPR’s Nick Miroff](http://www.npr.org/2012/02/06/146474813/u-s-travel-to-cuba-grows-as-restrictions-are-eased). Obviously, this influx of what has been theorized to be liberty-professing tourists has not resulted in an influx of such democratic ideals into this overwhelmingly federally controlled country.

One example is the case of Alan Gross, an American citizen working for USAID. He was arrested in Cuba in 2009 under the allegations of Acts against the Independence and Territorial Integrity of the State while distributing computers and technological equipment to Jewish communities in Cuba. He is currently serving the fourth of his fifteen-year conviction, is in poor health, and receiving little to no aid from the U.S., according to the [Gross Family website](http://www.bringalanhome.org/). In light of this, it is hard to believe that the U.S. would be able to protect a large number of tourists in a hostile nation, especially when they plan to ‘profess’ political freedom. This view is further promoted by the [Ladies in White](http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/04/29/3371054/ladies-in-white-leader-wants-us.html), a Cuban dissident group that supports the embargo. They fear ending it would only serve to strengthen the current dictatorial regime because the real blockade, they claim, is within Cuba. Allowing American travelers to visit Cuba does not help propel the cause of Cuban democracy; it hampers it.

Still there is the idea that further increasing American tourism to this nearby Caribbean island will at least aid their impoverished citizens in some manner, but this is neither a straight-forward nor easy solution. From the annual throng of American visitors, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio[declared](http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2011/2/icymi-under-rubio-questioning-obama-administration-admits-to-risk-of-cuba-travel) at a 2011 Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Hearing that an estimated, “$4 billion a year flow directly to the Cuban government from remittances and travel by Cuban Americans, which is perhaps the single largest source of revenue to the most repressive government in the region.”

These remittances are sent by Americans to help their Cuban families, not support the Cuban government. It is also a common belief that the Cuban embargo is a leading cause of poverty among the Cuban citizens and that lifting the embargo would go a long way toward improving the Cuban standard of living. However, no amount of money can increase the living standards there as long as their current regime stands. “After all, the authorities were already skimming 20 percent of the remittances from Cuban-Americans and 90 percent of the salary paid to Cubans by non-American foreign investors,” [states Alvaro Vargas Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492), Senior Fellow of The Center on Global Prosperity at The Independent Institute.

However unfortunate it may be, Cuba, in its current state, is a nation consisting only of a wealthy and powerful few and an impoverished and oppressed proletariat, who possess little to no means to escape or even improve their fate. Lifting the trade embargo will not increase the general prosperity of the Cuban people, but it will increase the prosperity of the government. Ergo, the poverty and dire situation of the Cuban people cannot be blamed on the United States or the embargo.

No doubt, it has been a fruitless 50 years since the embargo was enacted. Little has changed as far as democracy and human rights are concerned. To maintain control, Cuba has “managed to offset much of the effects over the years in large part because the Soviets subsidized the island for three decades, because the regime welcomed Canadian, Mexican and European capital after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and because Venezuela is its new patron,” [according to Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492). However, Venezuela is now undergoing a political transition of its own with the recent death of Hugo Chávez, its president for the past 14 years, and the controversial election of Nicolás Maduro.

Despite being Chávez’s handpicked successor, Maduro only won by a narrow margin and will likely be forced to cut spending on social programs and foreign assistance in an effort to stabilize Venezuela’s dire economic problems. Therefore, now is the ideal time to take action. Without Venezuela’s support, the Cuban government will assuredly face an economic crisis. Strengthening the embargo to limit U.S. dollars flowing into Cuba would place further pressure on the Cuban government and has the potential to trigger an economic collapse. A change in the Cuban political climate is within reach.

#### US actions won’t spur pro-democracy changes --- blowback is more likely.

Weeks & Fiorey 12 a. associate professor of political science and director of Latin American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte & b. M.A. candidate [Gregory Weeks & Erin Fiorey, Policy Options for a Cuban Spring, May-June 2012, MILITARY REVIEW http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\_20120630\_art014.pdf

U.S. Money Won’t Cause Change in Cuba What would a Cuban transition look like? Why would it start? No one predicted the Arab Spring, and for Cuba the many possible permutations are well beyond the scope of this article. Cuban opposition blogger Yoani Sánchez writes that Cubans view transition as similar to a dilapidated building in Havana: “The hurricanes don’t bring it down and the rains don’t bring it down, but one day someone tries to change the lock on the front door and the whole edifice collapses.”15 In any event, given the hermetic nature of the regime and its successful resistance to U.S. influence, it is very unlikely that the United States will have much influence over its initiation.

As the prominent Cuban dissident Oswaldo Payá argues, “One talks about the United States’ money for civil society . . . . The United States’ money won’t cause change in Cuba.”16 It is a point he has made repeatedly. If there is a Cuban Spring, then its emergence and ultimate success will hinge on its domestic wellsprings. In fact, this echoes the policy position of the administration of Barack Obama. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton put it in 2011, “These revolutions are not ours. They are not by us, for us, or against us, but we do have a role. We have the resources, capabilities, and expertise to support those who seek peaceful, meaningful, democratic reform.”17 Even the Catholic Cardinal in Cuba, Jaime Ortega, has cautioned against “a type of U.S. subculture which invades everything.”18 He was referring not only to culture, but also to politics.

What the wariness entails is an increased risk of backlash if the United States injects itself too forcefully. The United States faced a similar dilemma in the Arab Spring Middle Eastern transitions. Widespread perception that the United States is attempting to direct events fosters distrust and provides leverage to pro-regime forces or at the very least puts leaders on the defensive who might otherwise welcome assistance from the United States. This is commonly referred to as “blowback,” and over the long term, it could greatly reduce U.S. influence.

## \*\*\*Impacts\*\*\*

### Cuba Model Good

#### Cuba provides a key platform and model to spread economic democracy.

Se´bastien Boillat, Julien-Francois Gerber, and Fernando R. Funes-Monzote, 3/20/2012. Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba; Department of Economics, Harvard University; Estacio´n Experimental ‘‘Indio Hatuey’’, Central Espan˜a Republicana, Perico, Matanzas, Cuba. “What economic democracy for degrowth? Some comments on the contribution of socialist models and Cuban agroecology,” Futures 44.6.

Cuba faces the challenging task of going beyond productivist developmentalism inherited both from the Soviet bloc and from the capitalist West [29]. The country now widely recognizes that the conventional agricultural model leads to an increased dependency on imports, a weak food security, an increased vulnerability against world market trends, growing indebtedness and severe environmental degradations [21,45]. In this context, the Cuban experience with agroecology is a promising and unique example of ‘‘degrowth’’ as no such transition could be observed anywhere else on a large scale. A relatively egalitarian society (froman economic viewpoint) combined with strong public policies and the absence of landlord and agribusiness interests undoubtedly represent a key advantage in achieving such a transition. However, the centralized Soviet-type heritage has promoted industrial farms to the detriment of smaller-sized self-managed farms (especially UBPCs) more inclined to adopt a degrowth-oriented path. Because state farms – the favorite model – were managed by administrators applying large-scale receipts of chemical use in export monoculture, the system has separated managers and producers, neglected traditional knowledge, and prevented agricultural production adapted to local natural conditions [20,29]. Smaller production units and more democratic management are clearly the keys to pursue sustainable degrowth in this context. Although the Cuban government ascribes to this option, there is yet a long way t overcome resistance to change after many years of centrally-planned productivism. This empirical example suggests that theoretical models of self-managed socialism have the kind of realistic economic democracy that is best suited for a large-scale degrowth transition. Indeed, a voluntary reduction in material and energy consumption is only possible in an economic democracy that makes people responsible, as a community, for the environmental consequences of their own production and consumption pattern. People are directly responsible because, in Schweickart’s model, investment is socialized, workers have to manage their own enterprise, and there is no privileged class manipulating votes according to vested interest. Outside the pressure of amass consumption society, people can get closer to some of their true needs, the most important of them being fundamentally immaterial. In such economic democracy, people would have no choice but stay connected to the state of their natural resources. Combined together, these different elements open the way for a very real degrowth-oriented path. In this sense, we argue that a non-capitalist system provides a greater potential for achieving sustainable degrowth than a capitalist system.

The Cuban experience certainly provides some important lessons along these lines but many questions, experiences and debates will be necessary to build a new mobilizing eco-socialist model being at the same time efﬁcient, democratic and sustainable. The strengths and weaknesses of the Cuban experience show nevertheless that alternatives do exist and that people are not bound to repeat the same errors of centrally-planned productivism, capital concentration, work alienation or the elusive quest for inﬁnite growth. According to Martı´nez-Alier et al. [1], ‘‘for sustainable degrowth to be successful one important step **would be to provide a platform on which social movements from the North and the South, including conservationists, trade unions, small farmers movements and those movements from the South that defend a low environmental impact economy, can converge’’**. In particular, the conditions under which such convergence can develop must be better understood and patiently promoted. The lessons from Cuban agriculture are part of this understanding.

#### Cuba’s worker-ownership model is critical to sustainable degrowth.

Se´bastien Boillat, Julien-Francois Gerber, and Fernando R. Funes-Monzote, 3/20/2012. Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba; Department of Economics, Harvard University; Estacio´n Experimental ‘‘Indio Hatuey’’, Central Espan˜a Republicana, Perico, Matanzas, Cuba. “What economic democracy for degrowth? Some comments on the contribution of socialist models and Cuban agroecology,” Futures 44.6.

Sustainable degrowth has been deﬁned as ‘‘an equitable and democratic transition to a smaller economy with less production and consumption’’ [1]. It is about reducing the energy and material ﬂows while still fulﬁlling basic and growing human needs such as food, health, education and housing [2,3]. However, it turns out that capitalist institutions foster exactly the opposite trend. How then is degrowth going to be implemented on a large scale? Is it reasonable to think that today’s liberal democracies, associated with changes in public opinion, will sufﬁce?

For a long time, socialist scholars have argued that the kind of politics and ideology that prevails in a given society is closely related to the economic structure it displays [4,5]. More speciﬁcally, many of them are sceptical about the possibility to combine a true democracy with capitalism – the latter being fundamentally characterized by a lack of democracy in the ﬁrm. This is reﬂected, it is argued, in the fact that the political and economic life tends to be shaped according to the interests of a small group of people owning (or managing) the strategic means of production [6]. Indeed, this elite can use its disproportionate economic power to inﬂuence political processes through (dis)information campaigns, the funding of political parties, of candidates or of those organisations that produce and diffuse a certain kind of knowledge considered appropriate [7]. Alternatively, this dominant class can also threaten to plunge the country into a crisis if a government refuses to satisfy its interests (it can do so by delocalising production, investing abroad, and so on). A given government is thus to some extent forced to please the economic elite in order to stay in power.

Dahl and Lindblom [8] classically distinguished between ‘‘democracy’’ and ‘‘polyarchy’’. Polyarchy represents today’s dominant representative system: in such system, the electorate is not fully sovereign as it is a series of specialized elites – not a single, monolithic elite as in autocracy – that compete and bargain with one another for the control of government and society, through elections. Democracy, on the contrary, is a system in which the electorate is truly sovereign, meaning that:

(1) its members are reasonably well informed about the issues to be decided by the political process, and reasonably active in contributing to their resolution; and (2) there exists no stable minority elite with more political power than any other stable group, especially than the elected ofﬁcials. Democracy in this sense can hardly coexist with capitalism, a system fundamentally characterized by class stratiﬁcation.

Going back to the issue of a sustainable degrowth transition, we believe that such transitions can only be endorsed by citizens reasonably well informed about the socio-ecological issues at stake and reasonably active in contributing to their resolution, that is, by citizen unobstructed by a privileged class. This means, again, that degrowth appears to be hardly possible within today’s capitalism and associated liberal democracies. In line with this, many degrowth supporters seem more keen on models of participative and direct democracy [3] – but they remain rather unclear as to which speciﬁc idea of democracy can be combined to an economic structure fostering degrowth. Martı´nez-Alier et al. [1] have argued that future research on degrowth should crucially focus on understanding the conditions for reaching a reduction in the size of the economy. Indeed, research on these conditions must be theoretical as well as empirical and must focus on contemporary as well as historical experiences.

In the present paper, our objective is precisely to investigate the links between the economic structure, democratic principles, and degrowth. We shall do this by preliminarily exploring some theoretical issues as well as a countrywide experience. Firstly, we provide a discussion of some of the main models of alternative politico-economic systems in order to ﬁnd out their potential for achieving economic democracy and degrowth. We believe that degrowth supporters would gain from discussing such theoretical models. They include participatory planning, market socialism, and models based on workers’ self-management. We argue that the latter has the greatest chance of succeeding a degrowth transition. Secondly, we intend to learn some empirical lessons from Cuba’s agriculture – today’s largest real-life experience of agroecological “degrowth’’. In so doing, we keep a critical eye on the combination of participation, economic organization, and sustainable‘‘degrowth’’. Our hypothesis is that a largely non-capitalist system such as the Cuban economy – despite its many shortcomings – is in a better position to achieve forms of sustainable degrowth than capitalist countries, but that it would be even more so with more democracy. Speciﬁcally, we argue that small-scale farmer cooperatives have the best potential for achieving the degrowth-oriented goals of agroecology.

### Degrowth Good

#### Degrowth critical to prevent extinction through environmental collapse.

IPS, 11/7/2012. Inter Press Service. “For Champions of Degrowth, Less Is Much More,” http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/11/for-champions-of-degrowth-less-is-much-more/.

The concept of degrowth is not a very comfortable one in overdeveloped countries such as the United States.

But with the planet’s resources stretched to the limit, many argue that an action plan is needed to prevent the world’s largest economy from getting any bigger, especially with the global population projected to grow by another two billion by 2050.

Burgeoning population, flourishing economies and unsustainable consumption are putting a lot of pressure on Earth, disrupting ecosystems and the livelihoods of many human beings. The Global Footprint Network, an international sustainability think tank, estimates that humanity uses the equivalent of 1.5 planets to provide the resources people consume and absorb the waste they produce.

The human footprint on Earth’s systems has more than doubled over the last decades, and experts warn that humanity needs to significantly shrink its economy, while promoting environmental protection and diminishing inequalities.

“This intentional societal shifting is essential for a world where seven billion humans are depleting Earth’s biocapacity and threatening the collapse of key ecosystem services, like climate regulation, fisheries, pollination, and water purification,” Erik Assadourian, a senior fellow at the Worldwatch Institute, told IPS.

“By not proactively pursuing a path of degrowth, then we accept that **instead of degrowth we’ll have an uncontrolled global contraction that will lead to much more discomfort and human suffering than degrowth ever would**,” he added.

However, the ambitious aim of convincing richer countries to undergo drastic lifestyle changes is proving more elusive than ever.

Moreover, the necessity for degrowth comes at a time when the poorest one-third of humanity is still relying on increasing consumption to cope with a growing food demand and ensure a decent quality of life.

“Sustainable degrowth, in an environmental as well as a social sense, would require some sort of eco-socialist society,” Petter Næss, professor in Urban Planning at the Danish Aalborg University and author of many books that deal with issues of economic growth and sustainability in the urban context, told IPS.

### AT: Environment Impact Defense

#### Invisible threshold and complex inter-relationships means collapse could come at any point --- resilience is decreasing --- huge magnitude means you should err neg.

Hamdallah Zedan, November 2005. Currently the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ph.D. in Microbiology Université de Montreal, held teaching positions and directed research programs in industrial microbiology at the Universities of Montreal, Cairo, Aleppo and Tripoli. “The role of the convention on biological diversity and its protocol on biosafety in fostering the conservation and sustainable use of the world’s biological wealth for socio-economic and sustainable development,” Journal of Industrial Microbiology & Biotechnology 32.11/12, Ebsco.

The Earth’s physical and biological systems (land, atmosphere, oceans) are extremely complex and inter- related to the point that a change in even one component of any of the systems affects the other components and even the entire planet. **Despite their in-built resilience, these systems are now approaching the point where they may not be able to meet human demands** for adequate food, clean water, energy supplies, medicines and a healthy environment. As a result, the world is experi- encing a number of global environmental changes: depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer, climate change, loss of biological diversity, land degradation and desertiﬁcation, pollution of fresh and marine waters and accumulation of persistent organic pollutants. These changes are intensifying and are beginning to have a serious impact on the development goals and needs of a growing human population.

## \*\*\*Aff Answers\*\*\*

### 2AC – No Cuban Democracy

#### Cuban democracy is not emerging --- it’s a sham.

Associated Press, 10/20/2012. “Cuba's electoral process: Grassroots democracy or a sham? Lacks hoopla seen in many countries,” http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/10/20/cuba-electoral-process-grassroots-democracy-or-sham/.

HAVANA –  There are no flashy television ads or campaign signs spiked into front yards. And candidates definitely don't tour the island shaking hands and kissing babies.

Elections in Cuba lack the hoopla they have in other countries, but authorities here say they give people a voice in government and rebut charges that the country is undemocratic. Critics call them a sham since voters can't throw out the Communist Party long led by Fidel and Raul Castro.

A long, complicated and truly unique electoral process is under way on this communist-run island, with more than 8 million Cubans going to the polls this weekend for municipal elections. The process culminates in February, when national assembly legislators vote on who will occupy the presidency, a post held by Raul Castro since 2008.

The latest electoral exercise began in September when Cubans met in common spaces, parks and buildings for neighborhood assemblies to choose the candidates in municipal elections. Those assemblies nominated 32,000 candidates, and each electoral district must have between two and eight names on the ballot.

Sheets of paper with terse biographies and photos of the candidates were then taped up to strategically placed walls and windows in each neighborhood for residents to read. That's just about the only campaigning that's allowed.

On Sunday, Cubans will cast ballots to choose among these candidates for municipal assemblies that administer local governments and relay complaints on issues such as potholes and housing, social and sports programs.

After the local elections, commissions elected by workers, farmers, youth, student and women's groups then choose candidates for the national legislature, which eventually elects Cuba's next president.

Near-complete voter participation is expected. In 2007-2008, voter turnout was 96.8 percent.

The government says perennial high turnouts are a clear sign of support for the revolution. Dissidents say people vote for fear that not doing so could get them in trouble.

Polling places also turn into social gatherings for neighbors. Young students escort the elderly and the disabled to vote, and Cubans are reminded by state television, unions and women's groups that casting a ballot is a patriotic duty.

The entire process is devoid of party slogans, ads or logos, since only one party is legal in Cuba: the Communist Party, and its job is to "guide" society and its politics rather than impose candidates, said Ruben Perez, secretary of the National Electoral Commission.

"Voting is free, not obligatory and secret," he said. "Our system is totally transparent and we defend it like this. We think that it is very democratic.

"It is a different concept: no delegate represents any political interest, only society itself."

While the Communist Party's power and influence are enormous, candidates don't have to be party members.

But those who don't usually come from allied groups such as the Federation of Cuban Women and the neighborhood-watch Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

The nomination assemblies also see heated debate and criticisms about local problems such as slow police response, poor water supply and garbage pickup or unauthorized vending stands that block sidewalks.

But it is rare, almost unheard of, for a candidate to be nominated against the party's wishes, and there's no real electoral threat to the country's rulers. There are no direct elections for the presidency or for Communist Party leadership posts, which critics say hold real power in the country.

Members of the island's tiny dissident community have not been nominated when they tried in the past, and many boycott a system they consider illegitimate.

"To be truly democratic, besides being free (the elections) should be competitive and the people able to choose among alternative programs and in the case here there is only one program, that of the government," said Elizardo Sanchez, a dissident who runs the non-governmental Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation.

Sanchez said that while multiparty systems have deficiencies, the island's one-party electoral process "doesn't reflect the pluralism of Cuban society."

Cuban authorities say they have no plans to change the system.

"Our adversaries and even some of our sympathizers ... demand of us, as if we were a country living under normal conditions and not under siege, that we reinstall a multiparty model," Raul Castro said at a Communist Party conference in January. But legalizing parties other than the Communist Party would be to "sacrifice the strategic arm of the unity of all Cubans that has made our dreams of independence and social justice a reality."

### 2AC – Embargo Fails

#### Embargo does not promote democracy --- decades of failure disprove.

[Doug Bandow](http://www.cato.org/people/doug-bandow), 12/11/2012. Senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to former US president Ronald Reagan. “Time to End the Cuba Embargo,” National Interest, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/time-end-cuba-embargo.

The policy in Cuba obviously has failed. The regime remains in power. Indeed, it has consistently used the embargo to justify its own mismanagement, blaming poverty on America. Observed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: “It is my personal belief that the Castros do not want to see an end to the embargo and do not want to see normalization with the United States, because they would lose all of their excuses for what hasn’t happened in Cuba in the last 50 years.” Similarly, Cuban exile Carlos Saladrigas of the Cuba Study Group argued that keeping the “embargo, maintaining this hostility, all it does is strengthen and embolden the hardliners.”

Cuban human rights activists also generally oppose sanctions. A decade ago I (legally) visited Havana, where I met Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, who suffered in communist prisons for eight years. He told me that the “sanctions policy gives the government a good alibi to justify the failure of the totalitarian model in Cuba.”

Indeed, it is only by posing as an opponent of Yanqui Imperialism that Fidel Castro has achieved an international reputation. If he had been ignored by Washington, he never would have been anything other than an obscure authoritarian windbag.

Unfortunately, embargo supporters never let reality get in the way of their arguments. In 1994, John Sweeney of the Heritage Foundation declared that “the embargo remains the only effective instrument available to the U.S. government in trying to force the economic and democratic concessions it has been demanding of Castro for over three decades. Maintaining the embargo will help end the Castro regime more quickly.” The latter’s collapse, he wrote, is more likely in the near term than ever before.

Almost two decades later, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, retains faith in the embargo: “The sanctions on the regime must remain in place and, in fact, should be strengthened, and not be altered.” One of the best definitions of insanity is continuing to do the same thing while expecting to achieve different results.

#### Turn --- lifting embargo would empower democratic groups.

[Doug Bandow](http://www.cato.org/people/doug-bandow), 12/11/2012. Senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to former US president Ronald Reagan. “Time to End the Cuba Embargo,” National Interest, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/time-end-cuba-embargo.

Ending the embargo would have obvious economic benefits for both Cubans and Americans. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates American losses alone from the embargo as much as $1.2 billion annually.

Expanding economic opportunities also might increase pressure within Cuba for further economic reform. So far the regime has taken small steps, but rejected significant change. Moreover, thrusting more Americans into Cuban society could help undermine the ruling system. Despite Fidel Castro’s decline, Cuban politics remains largely static. A few human rights activists have been released, while Raul Castro has used party purges to entrench loyal elites.

Lifting the embargo would be no panacea. Other countries invest in and trade with Cuba to no obvious political impact. And the lack of widespread economic reform makes it easier for the regime rather than the people to collect the benefits of trade, in contrast to China. Still, more U.S. contact would have an impact. Argued trade specialist Dan Griswold, “American tourists would boost the earnings of Cubans who rent rooms, drive taxis, sell art, and operate restaurants in their homes. Those dollars would then find their way to the hundreds of freely priced farmers markets, to carpenters, repairmen, tutors, food venders, and other entrepreneurs.”

The Castro dictatorship ultimately will end up in history’s dustbin. But it will continue to cause much human hardship along the way.

The Heritage Foundation’s John Sweeney complained nearly two decades ago that “the United States must not abandon the Cuban people by relaxing or lifting the trade embargo against the communist regime.” But the dead hand of half a century of failed policy is the worst breach of faith with the Cuban people.

Lifting sanctions would be a victory not for Fidel Castro, but for the power of free people to spread liberty. As Griswold argued, “commercial engagement is the best way to encourage more open societies abroad.” Of course, there are no guarantees. But lifting the embargo would have a greater likelihood of success than continuing a policy which has failed. Some day the Cuban people will be free. Allowing more contact with Americans likely would make that day come sooner.

### 2AC – AT: Degrowth Impact

#### Degrowth will fail and environmental management is possible under the current system.

[Jeroen C.J.M. van den Bergh](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209), 3/15/2011. Institute for Environmental Science and Technology, and Department of Economics and Economic History, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra (Cerdanyola), Spain. Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, and Institute for Environmental Studies, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands. “Environment versus growth — A criticism of “degrowth” and a plea for “a-growth”,” Ecological Economics 70.5.

Degrowth proponents generally seem to think that we cannot expect too much from public policies aimed at controlling environmental problems, for two reasons: because policies are ineffective, and because their political acceptance is very low ([Schneider et al., 2010](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209#bb0125)). The first is not convincing: to illustrate, we know from empirical research that people are sensitive to prices which means that price regulation of energy or CO2 definitely would alter consumption (and production) patterns and in turn reduce pollutive emissions (e.g.,[Espey et al., 1997](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209" \l "bb0050), [Espey, 1998](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209#bb0040) and [Espey and Espey, 2004](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209#bb0045)).

The second reason, relating to political acceptance, has two dimensions, namely a national and international one. Environmental agreements between countries at the international level are a prerequisite for the implementation of effective national policies, at least for global, transboundary environmental problems like climate change, acid rain and biodiversity loss. This is so because of two reasons: the necessity to create a level playing field (so as minimize economic costs or damage); and efficient regulation having to take into account the often uneven (internationally) spatial distribution of sensitive ecosystems (e.g., in the context of acid rain) and cost-effective options for abatement. Without a response to global climate change in the form of an effective international agreement we will be unable to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a reasonably safe level. Governments or citizens on their own are very limited. Unilateral extreme action will be either ineffective (if lax) or economically harmful (if stringent) as it deteriorates the international competitive position of a country.

Should we be pessimistic about the process of international environmental agreement making, notably in the area of climate policy? Yes and no. Yes, because climate change seems to outpace institutional change in terms of effective agreement formation. No, because we have made quite some progress in the last two decades on scientific research, information diffusion, citizen and political awareness, and creation of international networks (IPCC, UN frameworks). Some pessimists will point at the failure of the Kyoto Protocol in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency of reducing GHGs, but at the same time Kyoto can be judged as a large step for [hu]mankind and a stepping stone for a more effective subsequent agreement. Institutional changes like international agreements, certainly for such a tough problem like climate policy, take time and require a social and international learning process. Whether we like it or not, democratic support for climate policy needs to develop slowly, which requires information transfer from science to society, education, media involvement and a great deal of public and private debate about climate change. All in all, it is too early to say that agreements and policy do not work and that we need to turn to some degrowth strategy instead (whether focusing on GDP, consumption, work-time or radical degrowth). Anyway, the political acceptability of the latter is likely to be much lower than of environmental agreements and national policies. Worse, I fear that employing the term “degrowth” really comes down to preaching to the choir, rather than enlarging the group of citizens who are genuinely concerned about the environment and critical about pleas for unconditional economic growth (i.e. the growth paradigm).

One argument of degrowth supporters against the social–political acceptability of stringent environmental regulation is that both rich and poor individuals will oppose policies that are seen to threaten their income ([Schneider et al., 2010](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209#bb0125)). Apart from wondering whether this is entirely true, it raises the question whether a direct (GDP, consumption, work-time or radical) degrowth strategy could really count on more democratic support than well-formulated environmental policies? I doubt it, since a degrowth strategy will make the income losses for everyone only more visible and explicit. Drawing attention to income effects may not be a clever, effective strategy to obtain political support for one's ideas. Instead, convincing society about public policies and strategies on the basis of expected impacts on real welfare or happiness rather than on income would make more sense. Not only does real welfare represent a more adequate (social) evaluation criteria, but also it will convey a less pessimistic message. For example, even if a stringent climate policy may negatively affect (average) income growth this does not necessarily translate into a reduction of real welfare ([van den Bergh, 2010b](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800910004209#bb0150)).

#### The environment is resilient --- has withstood massive destruction.

Gregg Easterbrook, 1995. Distinguished Fellow, Fullbright Foundation. A Moment on Earth pg 25.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF EVENTS SUCH AS LOVE CANAL OR THE Exxon Valdez oil spill, every reference to the environment is prefaced with the adjective "fragile." "Fragile environment" has become a welded phrase of the modern lexicon, like "aging hippie" or "fugitive financier." But the notion of a fragile environment is profoundly wrong. Individual animals, plants, and people are distressingly fragile. **The environment** that contains them **is close to indestructible.** The living environment of Earth has survived ice ages; bombardments of cosmic radiation more deadly than atomic fallout; solar radiation more powerful than the worst-case projection for ozone depletion; thousand-year periods of intense volcanism releasing global air pollution far worse than that made by any factory; reversals of the planet's magnetic poles; the rearrangement of continents; transformation of plains into mountain ranges and of seas into plains; fluctuations of ocean currents and the jet stream; 300-foot vacillations in sea levels; shortening and lengthening of the seasons caused by shifts in the planetary axis; collisions of asteroids and comets bearing far more force than man's nuclear arsenals; and the years without summer that followed these impacts. Yet hearts beat on, and petals unfold still. Were the environment fragile it would have expired many eons before the advent of the industrial affronts of the dreaming ape. Human assaults on the environment, though mischievous, are pinpricks compared to forces of the magnitude nature is accustomed to resisting.